



Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Rio Grande Council of Governments, TX & NM

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Since 1995, EPA has funded more than 200 Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the Rio Grande Council of Governments for a Brownfields Pilot. The Council serves as the regional planning agency to one county in southern New Mexico and six counties in west Texas. The Council has designated these communities as the Upper Rio Grande Project Area, and the Pilot will target brownfields properties located here. The area (population 235,364) is characterized by high unemployment, low per capita income, and minority rates ranging from 40.6% to 81.9%. The west Texas and southern New Mexico region is experiencing explosive population growth due to Sunbelt migration and immigration. However, the Upper Rio Grande area has not experienced the accompanying economic growth enjoyed by the rest of Texas.

The brownfields located throughout these counties are typical of those in rural areas. They include abandoned small industrial sites, light manufacturing and utilities, automotive service stations, farming operations, closed landfills, and illegal dump sites. The majority of these targeted sites, of which several are suspected of having heavy contamination, are surrounded by residential or other commercial properties, or are located in a potential growth corridor. These underused or abandoned properties

PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Rio Grande Council Of
Governments,
Texas and New Mexico*

Date of Announcement:
July 1998

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets the Upper Rio Grande Project Area, which encompasses one county in southern New Mexico and six counties in west Texas.

Contacts:

Rio Grande Council of
Governments
(915) 533-0998

Regional Brownfields Team
U.S. EPA - Region 6
(214) 665-6736

Visit the EPA Region 6 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6sf/bfpages/sfbfhome.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

negatively impact their communities through groundwater contamination, threats to public health, and depreciation of adjacent property values. The communities in the Upper Rio Grande Project Area do not have the economic resources to address brownfields issues; however, the Pilot project will serve as the first step toward reintegration of these underused properties into their communities.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the Rio Grande Council of Governments is to clean up and redevelop the contaminated properties in the project area and integrate them back into productive use, thereby adding economic, social, and/or recreational value to their communities. To aid in this effort, the Pilot will focus on brownfields identification, environmental assessment, and redevelopment planning. In addition, the Pilot will seek to build community consensus through outreach activities on project priorities and redevelopment strategies.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Identifying and inventorying brownfield sites in the project area;
- Conducting environmental site assessments to quantify the extent of contamination on identified sites;
- Performing community outreach activities;
- Performing more detailed Phase II site assessments as warranted; and
- Planning for financing the cleanup and future redevelopment of contaminated properties for sustainable reuse.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.